

"THE TRUTH SHALL MAKE YOU FREE."—CHRIST.

The Christian Freeman.

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Notes of the Month.

HOME AND ABROAD.

THE NOTES.—Simple religious faith has been so much annotated that we are now and then reminded of the Scotchwoman who was reading "Pilgrim's Progress," with Scott's notes, and was asked by Scott himself if she understood the book. "Yes," she said, "all but the notes!"

FOR THE BOYS.—The line of conduct chosen by a boy during the five years from fifteen to twenty will, in almost every instance, determine his character for life. As he is then careful or careless, prudent or imprudent, industrious or indolent, truthful or dissimulating, intelligent or ignorant, temperate or dissolute, so will he be in after years, and it needs no prophet to cast his horoscope or calculate his chances.

BAD HABITS.—The following may be read to the children to save them from such disagreeable habits of body as scowling, winking, twisting the mouth, biting the nails, constantly picking at something, twirling at a key or fumbling at a chain, drumming with the fingers, screwing or twisting a chair, or whatever you lay your hands on. Don't do any of these things. Learn to sit quietly like a gentleman, I was going to say; but I am afraid even girls fall into such tricks sometimes. There are much worse habits than these, to be sure; but we are speaking only of those little things that are annoying when they are persisted in. There are habits of speech, also—such as beginning every speech with, "you see," or "you know," "now-a," "I tell you what," "I tell ye, now," "I don't care," indistinct utterance, sharp, nasal tones; avoid them all. Stop and think what you are going to say, and let every word drop from your lips just as perfect as a new silver coin. Have a care about your way of sitting, standing and walking. Before you know it, you will find that your habits have hardened into a coat of mail that you cannot get rid of without a terrible effort.

JAPAN.—The Buddhist priesthood of Japan are a little uneasy at the progress of Christianity in some parts of Japan. A Japanese scholar of Jeddo, Jasui Chinei by name, comes into the lists as a defender of Buddhism against Christianity, in a work entitled "Bennus," or "Error Exposed." He thinks his people are making a blunder in substituting an inferior religion for their own. On the other hand, a Japanese reviewer of the book gives divers reasons for making the change and accepting the European religion.

DEVIL WORSHIP.—In olden times in Wales, Brittany, and some other parts of the world, the worship of the devil was not uncommon. Fear of the evil one was at the bottom of this superstition. We recently heard of the parish clergyman of Cramlington, Northumberland, who once called on a pitman at Seaton Delaval, who was dying, and, after praying with him, told him he earnestly hoped he had made his peace with God. "Aw's reet there, sir," said the man; "it's the other beggar aw'se fear'd on!"

TWO LOST GAMES.—It is now well known that the Roman Catholic Church prompted the French to try the game of war against the Germans, and to the sorrow of all good Catholics they lost the game. They were equally interested in Austria beating Prussia in 1866. Dr. Henry M. Field writes as follows: A gentleman who has resided for many years in Rome, told me on the very day that the battle of Sadowa was fought, Cardinal Antonelli told a friend of his to "come around to his house that night to get the news; that he expected to hear of one of the greatest victories ever won for the Church;" so confidently did he and his master the Pope anticipate the triumph of Austria. The gentleman went. Hour after hour passed, and no tidings came. It was midnight, and still no news of victory. Before morning the issue was known, that the Austrian army was destroyed. Cardinal Antonelli did not come forth to proclaim the tidings. He shut himself up, said my informant, and was not seen for three weeks!

DR. BUSHNELL.—Not a few of our Unitarian friends we know have been for years interested in the works of the recently deceased Dr. Bushnell, author of *Nature and the Supernatural*. Once while angling with a friend, the conversation turned on his having helped others and giving them something to think about. And his friend said that he must have found a good deal of satisfaction in such remembrance. The Doctor replied with earnestness: "The only thing I have any satisfaction in as respects myself is the consciousness that I have loved truth, and, above all things, have desired to know it." Of how many theological writers can the same statement be made?

A CENTURY OF CHANGE.—Our American brethren are now holding high festival on the 100th anniversary of their independence. We send them kindest greetings. One of their writers does not think of all the changes of the last hundred years, and puts his thoughts in the following form:—Here is a Centennial contrast—first as "Poor Richard" had it in 1776:

"Farmer at the plough,
Wife milking the cow,
Daughter spinning yarn,
Son thrashing in the barn,
All happy to a charm."

And now for the modern improvements in 1876:

"Farmer gone to see a show,
Daughter at the piano,
Madam gaily dressed in satin,
All the boys learning Latin,
With a mortgage on the farm."

OVERSHOT HIS MARK.—Some time ago the Rev. John Page Hopps of Glasgow received a letter which he published. The intolerant writer has had his effusion severely criticised and condemned by other than our Unitarian papers. It is not often, we trust, that the most bigoted write in the following strain: "You see this is addressed to the plain John; you are not worthy the term Mr., much less Rev. Such men as you are a disgrace to any country. Being in a railway waiting room a short time since, I took up a book of tracts, in which I saw one of your cursed tracts put. What on earth, thought I, does this do here. A party of us agreed the flames was the place for your tract. There it went, and there you will go, too, if you do not alter your belief. It was the lecture on hell that was burnt in it. You foolishly put faith in members of Unitarian Churches, which I will take oath are composed of drunkards, swearers, liars, to the extent of more in proportion than any Church in Christendom!!"

PLAIN LANGUAGE FOR PLAIN PEOPLE.—The importance of the usefulness of simple language and the confusion which comes through its absence was recently illustrated in a small village. The clergyman desired to give notice that there would be no service in the afternoon, as he was going to officiate for another clergyman. The clerk, as soon as the sermon was finished, rose up with all due solemnity, and cried out, "I am requested to give notice that there will be no service this afternoon, as Mr. L. is going fishing with another clergyman."

WOMAN AND CHRISTIANITY.—We often rejoice to hear and to feel how true are the remarks that no religious system has so elevated woman as the Christian religion. The correspondent of one of the religious newspapers reminds us there is another side at least, as the Rev. John Weiss, who was formerly a Unitarian minister, thinks. He says, Mr. Weiss discussed the other Sunday in the Parker Memorial Hall on the fruits of the Christian religion. "All the ancient religions, before Christ, he claimed, were underlaid with veins of the purest morality; and that the Japanese, Burmese and other Eastern nations showed far greater morality in their treatment of women, their performance of public duties, in the purity of their dealings, and in the simplicity of their lives, before than after they had received Christian teaching, and eminently exceeded the missionaries and their associates in this respect." We never read anything more glaringly untrue.

BORN IN BOSTON.—In a recent ride, says one of our correspondents, between Reading and London, I heard a gentleman ask the company if they could say how it was that Unitarianism, and not the Evangelical religion, flourished so in Boston, United States. All were perplexed, and so he informed us that the American born in Boston—so proud is he of this city—never thought he had any need of being born again; and this was one reason why all the Boston Christians of all sects kept Moody and Sankey out of their city. An American paper records as a part of a recent speech of the Rev. Dr. Furness something confirmatory of this joke. The speaker said, "It is every man's duty to think as highly of himself as the truth would permit, as the world generally takes men at the price they put upon themselves." Hence, 'my native city of Boston' is a conspicuous example in this respect. Its citizens are so proud of it that it is said that the reason there are so many Unitarians there is that the people, having been born in Boston, consider that amply sufficient for salvation, and cannot conceive that there is any need that they should be born again!"

TEST OF NUMBERS.—The *New Jerusalem Messenger*, in discussing the lack of growth in Swedenborgian ranks, says: "The test of numbers is always against the highest and best things. It is against Christianity itself. It would not do to put it to the test of the ballot. The heathen could out-vote Christians ten to one. The ignorant could outvote the intelligent. One must aim low to hit at the multitude." The test of numbers is always being applied to Unitarians, and we are at last in danger of becoming rather proud of our being so small a sect in the Christian world. Perhaps we should beware of pride.

GOSPEL SHELLS.—A letter is made public in one of our religious exchanges, written by a pastor to an evangelist. The pastor says: "I want you to arrange your work to suit yourself. I will suggest, however, that my people will endure and relish large doses of salvation, administered 'full strength' and 'hot.' A few gospel 'shells' hurled among them, after the manner in which you are able to do it, may stir them." We leave the reader to guess the school to which this pastor belongs. But we protest against the utterance of such language to the world, by a minister of any name. It would be bad enough if spoken in a whisper. This is the sort of talk which disgusts a great many people with revivals, and all kinds of religious activity. It represents a far too common type of experience, and style of effort. And we believe the harm it does, in various ways, to be very considerable."—*Christian Register*.

UNITARIANISM VINDICATED.—During the past few months there has been considerable agitation at Darlington on the question of Unitarianism. Lectures for and against have been given by various ministers. The Rev. William Elliott has published one of his excellent lectures in the course, which concludes with the following vindication of the Unitarian's love for Christ: "We cannot look on such a life without loving Jesus, and without thanking God that he sent him into the world to show what man may be. Impressed with the transcendent goodness of his character, and with the matchless wisdom of his instructions, we cannot but speak of him in terms of profoundest respect. And we rejoice to accept him as the way, the truth, and the life, as the loftiest example of religious excellence the world has ever seen; and if we cherish one desire and hope more than another, it is that men everywhere may be blessed by his instructions and filled with his spirit, so that if on earth it is their lot to have fellowship with his sufferings, they may in heaven be made the partakers of his everlasting peace."

ABOLITION OF DEATH PUNISHMENT.—A new law has just been passed in Massachusetts. We give a few lines:—"Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in Legislature assembled, as follows: Section 1. The penalty of death, as a punishment for crime, is hereby abolished. Section 2. All crimes now punishable with death shall hereafter be punished by imprisonment at hard labour for life."

THE TRINITARIAN DIFFICULTY.—The Holy Spirit is repeatedly spoken of in Scripture as being under the power and in the disposal of the Father. So, too, the Son is repeatedly spoken of as subordinate to the Father, and as deriving all his power and authority from the Father. Trinitarians say, indeed, that these texts refer only to the Son's human nature, and not to his supposed Divine one; but, in the case of the Holy Spirit, no such evasion can be resorted to, for even the Trinitarians do not attribute to Him any "incarnation." Moreover, if the three persons of the Trinity be coequal, is it not very strange that there should be passages so strong and so numerous in assertion of the inferiority and subjection of the Son and Spirit to the Father; and yet that there should not be one passage in the whole Bible that speaks of any inferiority or subjection, real or apparent, of the Father to the Son and Spirit?

PROPRIETY.—We have been pained at times at the sensational efforts to gather people together for religious instruction. We gladly copy the following rebuke from a Methodist paper: "We can but think that the cause of Christ is often sorely wounded by the extravagances of some of its professed friends aiming after the eccentric. Witness the following, which has been printed and circulated as part of a hand-bill:—

Free Seats.

Free Gospel.

Free Salvation.

New Christians made and old Christians
mended every night
in the
First Methodist Church
of _____

Come and welcome! You will find ample
accommodation, kind treatment, and
every courtesy.

Now what *must* sober-minded Christians think of such a travesty as that? And what will not the ungodly say? It must be that the cause of the Gospel is the cause of God, or some classes of its friends would kill it."

A PAWNBROKER'S INCIDENT.

As a pawnbroker in a populous suburb of London, I have occasion to see painful and sometimes not unpleasant phases of society. Just to give an idea of what occasionally comes under the notice of persons in my profession, I shall describe a little incident and its consequences. One evening I stepped to the door for a little fresh air, and to look out for a moment. While I was gazing up and down the road, I saw a tidily-dressed young person step up to our side door. She walked like a lady, and let me tell you that in nine cases out of ten, it is the walk, and not the dress, which distinguishes the lady from the servant-girl. First she looked about, and then she seemed to make up her mind in a flurried sort of a way, and in a moment she was standing at our counter, holding out a glittering something in a little, trembling hand, covered with a worn kid glove.

My assistant, Isaacs, was stepping up to take the seal, when I came in and interposed. The poor young thing was so nervous and shy, and altogether so unused to this work, that I felt for her as if she had been my own daughter, almost. She could not have been over eighteen years old—too frail and gentle a creature.

"If you please, will you tell me," she said in a sweet, low voice, trembling with nervousness, "what is the value of this seal?"

"Well, miss," I said, taking the seal into my hand and looking at it—it was an old-fashioned seal, such as country gentlemen used to wear, with a coat-of-arms cut upon it—"that depends upon whether you want to pledge it or sell it outright."

"I am married, sir," and she said the words proudly and with dignity, though still so shy, and seeming ready to burst out crying, "and my husband is very ill—and—and"—then the tears wouldn't be kept back any longer, and she sobbed as if her poor little heart would break.

"There, there, my dear," I said to her, "don't cry; it will come all right in time;" and I tried to comfort her as well as I could in my own rough-

and-ready way. "I will lend you, ma'am," I said to her at last, "a sovereign upon this seal; and, if you wish to sell it, perhaps I may be able to sell it for you to advantage." And so I gave her a pound; it was more than the thing was worth as a pledge, and she tripped away with a lighter heart, and many thanks to me, and I thought no more of the matter at the time.

The very next day, the day before Christmas, there came into our place of business a very eccentric old gentleman, who had called upon us very often before, not for the sake of pawning anything, though he was generally dressed shabby enough, too. But he was a collector, one of those men who are mad upon old china, and curiosities of all sorts.

"Anything in my way to-day, Mr. Davis?" he said, in his quick, energetic manner, with a jolly smile upon his face, and putting down the cigarette he was smoking upon the edge of the counter.

The Rev. Mr. Broadman is a collector of gems, and rings, and seals, and, in fact, of any stones that have heads or figures engraved upon them. And I had been in the habit of putting aside for him whatever in this way passed through my hands, for he gave us a better price than we should have got for them at the quarterly sales. "The fact is, Davis," he used to say to me, "these things are invaluable; many of them are as beautiful, on a small scale, as the old Greek sculptures; and some of them even by the same artists. And they are made no longer, you see, for in this busy nineteenth century of ours, time and brains are too precious to be spent on these laborious trifles." Now, although I had no kind of stones he wanted just then, it entered into my head that I would tell him about the seal which had come into my possession the evening before.

I told him the story somewhat as I have told it to you. He listened attentively to all I said. When I had done, he looked at the seal, and said, "I observe that it is the heraldic emblem of a baronet." He then congratulated me upon the way in which I had acted.

He asked, too, for this young lady's address, which she had given me quite correct; and then he left the shop without another word.

You must give me leave to tell the rest of the story in my own way, although it may be in a very different way from that which the reverend gentleman employed in relating it to me afterwards.

It seemed it was a runaway match. A county baronet's son had fallen in love with the clergyman's daughter, in the village where her father lived, and they had got married. Then they came up to London, these two poor young things, for neither his father, nor hers either, for the matter of that, would have anything to say on the match,—he, full of hopes of getting on in the literary and artistic line, and she, poor creature, full of trust in him.

The project of living by literature did not turn out what was expected. The young fellow, without experience or friends, spent much time going about from one publisher to another, and sending his writings to the editors of various magazines—which, I need not say, were always "returned with thanks." And then he fell ill; typhus, I fancy, brought on by insufficient nourishment and bad drainage, and disappointed hopes. The Registrar-General does not give a return of these cases in any list that I am aware of. But we see something of them in our line of business nevertheless.

It was just at this time that Mr. Broadman found Mrs. Vincent; for that was the name of the young lady who came to the shop with the gold seal. Cambridge-terrace is not very far from the Angel at Islington, and there in a little street of small, respectable houses, inhabited by junior clerks, with here and there a lodging-house, in one of which Mr. and Mrs. Vincent lived.

They were rather shy at first of a stranger, and a little proud and haughty, perhaps. People who have seen better days, and are down upon their luck, are apt to be so. But the parson, with his pleasant ways and cheery voice, soon made it all right, and in a jiffy he and Mr. Vincent were talking about collége,

for they both had been to the same university. And there was even soon a smile—a wan smile enough—upon the poor invalid's sharp-cut, thin face, with the hollow, far-away eyes, which looked at you as if out of a cavern. He was the wreck of a fine young fellow, too; of one who had been used to his hunting and shooting, and all the fine country sports which make broad-chested, strong-limbed country people, the envy of us poor, thin, pale, townsfolk.

Mr. Broadman came direct to me when he left them. I did not live far off, and he thought I might lend them a neighbour's help. "Davis," said he, "that poor fellow is dying; I can see death in his eyes."

"What is he dying of?" I asked.

He looked at me steadfastly for a moment, and I could see a moisture in his eye as he said, slowly and solemnly, "Of starvation, Davis, of actual want of food."

"A gentleman starving in London, in Islington, a baronet's son, too; incredible!"

"Not at all, said Mr. Broadman; "these are the very people who do die of starvation in London, and in all great cities. Not the poor, who know where the workhouse is, and who can get at the relieving officer if the worst comes to the worst; but the well-born, who have fallen into destitute poverty, and who carry their pride with them, and dive into a back alley, like some wild animal into a hole, and die alone. Mr. Vincent wants wine and jelly, and all sorts of good things, if help hasn't come too late. No, no, my friend," he continued, putting back my hand, for I was ready to give my money in a proper cause. "No, no, I have left them all they want at present, Davis. But I'll tell you what you can do; you can, if you like to, play the good Samaritan, go and see them, and cheer them up a bit, perhaps;" and then Mr. Broadman told me, shortly, something of what these two poor things had gone through—she loving and trusting him so; and he half mad that he had brought her to this pass, and could do nothing for her.

Mr. Broadman wrote that very day to the baronet, a proud, hard man, I'm

told. But the letter he wrote back was soft enough, and melting to read; it was so full of human nature, you see—the father's heart swelling up at the thought of getting back his son; and bursting through the thick crust of pride which had prevented him from making the first advances. And the parson says to me, "Well, Mr. Davis, there are many people kept asunder for the want of somebody to go between them, and make peace."

And I said, partly to myself, "Why shouldn't Christianity itself be such a general peacemaker as that?"

"Ay," replied Mr. Broadman, "if people only believed in it properly."

The very day we got the baronet's letter I was on my way, in the afternoon, to Cambridge-terrace, to pay my respects to Mrs. Vincent—and I had sent in a few bottles of good old port wine from my own wine merchant, at least as good as can be got for love or money. Well, when I got near the door I saw an old gentleman walking up and down, a little disturbed, apparently, in his mind at finding himself in such a queer locality, and as if looking for something or somebody. A short, rosy-faced person he was, clean shaved as a pin, and very neat and old-fashioned in his dress, and with that sort of air about him which marks an English country gentleman wherever he may be. Well, we soon got into talk, for I had spotted the baronet in a moment, and he was anxious to find out something about his son, as soon as he heard that I knew a little about the young couple.

"And do you think, sir, that my—that Mr. Vincent is dangerously ill?" said the old baronet; and there was a sob in his voice as he spoke, and his hand trembled as he laid it upon mine.

"Here is the house, sir," I said, "and you will be able to judge for yourself."

We went in. At least the baronet went into the room, trembling in every limb with the excitement of seeing his son. But when he set eyes on him, the poor man was so startled that he could scarcely speak. His son saw him, and tried to rise, but fell back feebly in his chair. "Dear father," he mur-

mured, stretching out a thin, trembling hand, "forgive"—

But the father was on his knees by the chair in a moment, clasping his son's head in his arms, and fondling him as he had done when he was a baby.

"What have I to forgive? You must forgive me for being so hard, my dear boy, and get better soon, Wilfred, my son, my son, my son!"

I, too, had come into the room; I could not help it, I was so interested and excited. But I saw that in the young man's face which made my heart sink within my bosom like lead.

The young wife saw it too, and gave one, two, three sharp screams, as if a knife had been thrust into her side.

Mr. Broadman saw it; and quietly kneeling down, commended to God—as well as he could for sobbing—the soul of His servant departing this life.

And I—well, why should I be ashamed to confess it?—I knelt down too, and cried like a child; for the young man had died in his father's arms at the very moment of reconciliation.—*Chambers' Journal.*

UNITARIAN PRINCIPLES.

THOSE who deny to this sect the name of Christian show only their want of acquaintance with its writing and its preaching. It is easy to make the charge of "infidelity" against a religious body; but to intelligent minds those who make this charge only exhibit their own want of charity or knowledge. Men do not build churches, hold public worship, support ministers, and spend money in works which look exactly like Christian works, and are just what other Churches do which call themselves Christians, while all the time they are infidels or atheists. There are some absurdities so patent that they refute themselves, and bring confusion upon their prophets; and to say that Unitarians, who have Churches in America, and England, and France, and Holland, and Switzerland, and Germany, and Austria, and have had them for hundreds of years—who pray in Christ's name, and sing hymns in his honour, and commend his example, and

repeat his characteristic words—to say that a sect of this kind is not “Christian” is one of the absurdities that would be incredible if men were not found foolish enough to utter it. A similar utterance was that of those Pharisees who ventured to say that Jesus could not be God’s prophet because he did not keep the Sabbath-day in their fashion. More sensible men at once answered them that the acts of the healer and the words of the teacher proved sufficiently that he was a prophet from God. There were “blind leaders of the blind” in Judea eighteen hundred years ago, and there are blind leaders of the blind in our time. And there are no persons whom these words of Jesus more accurately describe than those who deny the Christian name to a religious body of whose ideas and principles they are ignorant, which they take no pains to know, and who only care to foster the illusion of those who know as little of it as themselves. Paul has words of this class of men, too, in that first letter of his to Timothy, where he speaks of persons “desiring to be teachers of the law, understanding neither what they say, nor whereof they affirm.”

There is no need of refuting a charge which refutes itself to a thoughtful mind from the facts which cannot be denied. But a simple statement of Unitarian principles and doctrines, which might be made throughout from the very words of Jesus, may show more clearly the folly of the charge so loosely brought. We separate the principles from the doctrines, since the first are the working force of a religious body, the second only its temporary, possibly its shifting, opinions. Every Church must be judged by its principles, by its ideas, by the ideas which move it and give it power. Now, no Church has principles more distinctly defined, more universally admitted, than the Unitarian Church. The Episcopal, or Presbyterian, or Baptist, or Methodist bodies cannot be surer of their ideas than the Unitarian. There are certain principles on which all our Churches, all our ministers, all our men and women, communicants and non-communicants, whatever their different

notions about one or another dogma—certain principles upon which all are agreed, which all in our body recognise and magnify.

1. The first of these principles is the grand Protestant principle of the *right of private judgment*. We hold to this in the fullest extent. We say that every man has a right to form his creed for himself, from his own investigation, thought, and conviction, and that no one has a right to hamper him in the process of finding this, or to dictate to him by authority what he shall believe; that there shall be absolute and perfect freedom for all men in coming to religious truth as much as to any other truth. We say that no councils, no synods, no catechisms, no fathers of the Church, no doctors of the Church, no preachers, no editors, whether of the ancient time or the present time, have a right to lord it over the souls of men, or to say what they *must* or *must not* believe. Every man must settle that for himself. Catechisms, councils, wise men, may help him in his decision, but cannot decide for him beforehand. This is a principle which every Unitarian Church in this country or in Europe maintains with all positiveness, and from which no temptation could draw it away. Every Unitarian asserts the right of every man to think for himself in coming to his saving belief.

2. A second principle of the Unitarian Church is *that no one can be required or expected to believe what is contrary to reason*, or what seems to be so; that reason is the arbiter of truth, and that all truth is to be tested by reason. Unitarians hold that reason was given to man as his light and his guide, that this is the “logos” of which John speaks, and that the only faith which is good for anything is that which reason accepts. All beyond this is profession, phrases, but not truth; of no use to any one. All Unitarians are rationalists in this sense—that they do not wish or intend to say that they believe anything which seems to them to be mathematically, metaphysically, or morally untrue, contrary to the accepted laws of science or of the soul—anything which is absurd to the reason or revolting to the conscience. They

will not believe a mathematical falsehood, or falsehood of any kind, though it may be called a mystery, and pretend to be revealed by an angel. Every Church in the body, every intelligent member in the body, holds to this principle, however high or deep their thought of God and Christ may be. We are all rationalists in vindicating reason as the ground of faith.

3. A third principle of the Unitarian Church is that *no man is infallible*, that no creed can be framed that shall be beyond the reach of error, or that shall not be open to change; that no form of words or even of ideas can set forth the absolute truth as it is in the mind of God. The wisest men make mistakes, and they make mistakes in interpreting and deciding religious truth as much as in interpreting and deciding any other truth. There is no infallible teacher, there is no infallible Church, and there never can be. A thousand men, or a million men, agreeing to say the same thing do not make that thing true. A doctrine is not true because it has been repeated for a thousand years in thousands of churches. The Catholic Church is not infallible, in spite of its claim to own the Holy Spirit. The Protestant Church, in any branch, is not infallible, in spite of its claim of going by the letter of the Bible. There never was a saint or a prophet, since the Church began, who could say that he was exempt from the possibility of error. All Unitarians hold to their principles. We have no infallible standard in the words of any man, or in the words of any set of men.

4. A fourth principle of the Unitarian Church is that *no creed can contain the whole of religion*; that religion, religious faith, cannot possibly be summed up in the words of a creed. No formula, however ingeniously phrased and arranged, can possibly contain all that the soul believes and feels about man and God, and the relation between them. Religion is broader, deeper, higher, than any creed can possibly be. A creed may attempt to tell what faith is, may tell some things which we believe, but it falls short of expressing all our belief even now, much less all that we may believe here-

after. It may have five articles, or thirty-nine articles, or a hundred articles, and still be inadequate. It may be very simple or very complex, very clear or very obscure, and still fail to include all faith. Some Unitarians like creeds, while others do not; but all agree that a creed can never be a finality, never be fixed for all time, and for the substance of all faith never stand as a barrier to all farther religious advance. There is not one Unitarian anywhere, in any Unitarian Church, who sums up the religion of all men, or even his own religion, in the words of any creed.

5. A fifth principle of the Unitarian Church is that *there can be, and that there ought to be, no uniformity of religious faith*. Differences of faith are inevitable. Men cannot all believe alike, more than they can look alike or act alike. Their faith will vary with their temperament, with their education, with their habits of thought, with the influences around them. Some will be able to believe what others cannot possibly believe. Some will accept readily what others cannot be persuaded to accept. All attempts to establish one creed for the various branches of the Church is preposterous. Sects and parties in religious things are as natural and as necessary as they are in secular things. And it is just as impossible to force unanimity upon the major points as upon the minor points of the creed. All men cannot be made to see God in exactly the same way, or to find salvation in exactly the same way, more than they can be made to take precisely the same view of baptism and the Sabbath. This principle of permitted and inevitable diversity of religious opinion is one which all Unitarians, whether of the right wing or the left wing, most strenuously maintain.

6. A sixth principle of the Unitarian Church is that *sincere faith is the only true faith*; that a mere form of words or phrases does not express a man's faith, unless he knows what he is saying. A man's creed is not what he utters with the lips, but what he utters with the mind and heart; not what he repeats following the dictation of a priest, but what he repeats out of the

motion of his own soul. His real belief is not his *professed* belief, but his *honest* belief, be this much or little, be this identical with, or different from his professed belief. Everything which one adds to his honest conviction is superfluous, however it may coincide with the dogmas of the Church. It is a principle of all Unitarian Churches that saving faith is not in form of sound words, but in the sense of clear ideas; that sincerity is the prime requisite in all religious statements and confessions. They will never ask a convert to say that he believes one jot or tittle more than he does sincerely believe, even if he may be kept out of the kingdom of heaven by the defects of his faith. Strict and perfect sincerity is the avenue by which they would send forth their confession of belief,

7. A seventh principle of the Unitarian Church is that *character is better than profession of any kind*, and that profession without character is good for nothing. The character of a man tells what he really believes better than his words can tell this. The acts of a man, his general tone of thought, and habits of life, are the expression of his real creed. We look for his belief at what he is, and not what he says he is. We ask for better proof than any declarations, specially made. The creed is written in the life, and the world reads it from the man's life. Every article must be practically witnessed by the general tenor of the man's acts or words. This all Unitarians assert, whether they have a creed or not, that the creed is second to the life, and must never be made the evidence or the substitute for the righteousness of the man. They infer no man's Christianity from the ease and readiness with which he repeats the phrases of the Catechism; but they look first at the work which he does, at what he shows himself to be, whether his life and acts have any resemblance to the acts and life of the Christ. That is first, last, and always their test of the Christian character.

C. H. BRIGHAM.

"If any one thinks that a Unitarian is not a Christian, I plainly say, without being a Unitarian myself, that I think otherwise."—*Bishop Watson.*

DO THE NEXT THING.

FROM an old English parsonage
Down by the sea,
There came, in the twilight,
A message to me;
Its quaint Saxon legend,
Deeply engraven,
Hath, as it seems to me,
Teaching from heaven;
And through the hours
The quiet words ring,
Like a low inspiration,
"Doe ye nexte thyng."

Many a questioning,
Many a fear,
Many a doubt,
Hath its quieting here.
Moment by moment,
Let down from heaven:
Time, opportunity,
Guidance are given;
Fear not to-morrows,
Child of the King;
Trust them with Jesus,
"Doe ye nexte thyng"

Oh, he would have thee
Daily more free,
Knowing the might
Of thy royal degree;
Ever in waiting,
Glad for his call;
Tranquil in chastening,
Trusting through all.
Comings and goings
No turmoil need bring;
His all thy future—
"Doe ye nexte thyng."

Do it immediately,
Do it with prayer,
Do it reliantly,
Casting off care;
Do it with reverence,
Tracing his hand
Who hath placed it before thee
With earnest command.
Stared on Omnipotence,
Safe 'neath his wing,
Leave all resultings,
"Doe ye nexte thyng."

Looking to Jesus;
Ever serener,
Working or suffering,
Be thy demeanour!
In the shade of his presence,
The rest of his calm,
The light of his countenance,
Live out thy psalm.
Strong in his faithfulness,
Praise him and sing;
Then, as he beckons thee,
"Doe ye nexte thyng."

THE COUPLE WHO DOTE UPON THEIR CHILDREN.

BY CHARLES DICKENS.*

THE couple who dote upon their children have usually a great many of them: six or eight at least. The children are either the healthiest in all the world, or the most unfortunate in existence. In either case, they are equally the theme of their doting parents, and equally a source of mental anguish and irritation to their doting parents' friends.

The couple who dote upon their children recognise no dates but those connected with their births, accidents, illnesses, or remarkable deeds. They keep a mental almanack with a vast number of Innocents' days, all in red letters. They recollect the last coronation, because on that day little Tom fell down the kitchen stairs; the anniversary of the Gunpowder Plot, because it was on the fifth of November that Ned asked whether cocked hats grew in gardens. Mrs. Whiffler will never cease to recollect the last day of the old year as long as she lives, for it was on that day that the baby had the four red spots on its nose which they took for the measles; nor Christmas day, for twenty-one days after Christmas day the twins were born; nor Good Friday, for it was on a Good Friday that they were frightened by the donkey cart when she was walking out with Georgiana. The movable feasts have no motion for Mr. and Mrs. Whiffler, but remain pinned down tight and fast to the shoulders of some small child, from whom they cannot be separated any more. Time was made, according to their creed, not for slaves, but for girls and boys; the restless sands in his glass are but little children at play.

As we have already intimated, the children of this couple can know no medium. They are either prodigies of good health or prodigies of bad health; whatever they are, they must be prodigies. Mr. Whiffler must have to describe at his office such excruciating agonies constantly undergone by his eldest boy, as nobody else's eldest boy ever underwent; or he must be able to declare that there never was a child endowed

with such amazing health, such an indomitable constitution, and such a cast iron frame, as his child. His children must be, in some respect or other, above and beyond the children of all other people. To such an extent is this feeling pushed, that we were once slightly acquainted with a lady and gentleman who carried their heads so high and became so proud after their youngest child fell out of a two-pair-of-stairs window without hurting himself much, that the greater part of their friends were obliged to forego their acquaintance. But perhaps this may be an extreme case, and one not justly entitled to be considered as a precedent of general application.

If a friend happen to dine in a friendly way with one of these couples who dote upon their children, it is nearly impossible for him to divert the conversation from their favourite topic. Everything reminds Mr. Whiffler of Ned, or Mrs. Whiffler of Mary Anne, or of the time before Ned was born, or the time before Mary Anne was thought of. The slightest remark, however harmless in itself, will awaken slumbering recollections of the twins. It is impossible to steer clear of them. They will come uppermost, let the poor man do what he may. Ned has been known to be lost sight of for half an hour, Dick has been forgotten, the name of Mary Anne has not been mentioned, but the twins will out. Nothing can keep down the twins.

"It's a very extraordinary thing, Saunders," says Mr. Whiffler to the visitor, "but—you have seen our little babies, the—the—twins?" The friend's heart sinks within him as he answers, "Oh, yes—often." "Your talking of the Pyramids," says Mr. Whiffler, quite as a matter of course, "reminds me of the twins. It's a very extraordinary thing about those babies—what colour should you say their eyes were?" Mrs. Whiffler then relates, in broken English, a witticism of little Dick's bearing upon the subject just introduced, which delights Mr. Whiffler beyond measure, and causes him to declare that he would have sworn that was Dick's if he had heard it anywhere. Then he requests that Mrs. Whiffler will tell Saunders what Tom said about mad

* From *Young Couples*.

bulls; and Mrs. Whiffler relating the anecdote, a discussion ensues upon the different character of Tom's wit and Dick's wit, from which it appears that Dick's humour is of a lively turn, while Tom's style is the dry and caustic. This discussion being enlivened by various illustrations, lasts a long time, and is only stopped by Mrs. Whiffler instructing the footman to ring the nursery bell, as the children were promised that they should come and taste the pudding.

The friend turns pale when this order is given, and paler still when it is followed by a great pattering on the staircase (not unlike the sound of rain upon a skylight), a violent bursting open of the dining-room door, and the tumultuous appearance of six small children, closely succeeded by a strong nursery-maid with a twin in each arm. As the whole eight are screaming, shouting, or kicking—some influenced by a ravenous appetite, some by a horror of the stranger, and some by a conflict of the two feelings—a pretty long space elapses before all their heads can be ranged round the table and anything like order restored; in bringing about which happy state of things both the nurse and footman are severely scratched. At length Mrs. Whiffler is heard to say, "Mr. Saunders, shall I give you some pudding?" A breathless silence ensues, and sixteen small eyes are fixed upon the guest in expectation of his reply. A wild shout of joy proclaims that he has said "No, thank you." Spoons are waved in the air; legs appear above the table-cloth in uncontrollable ecstasy, and eighty short fingers dabble in damson syrup.

While the pudding is being disposed of, Mr. and Mrs. Whiffler look on with beaming countenances, and Mr. Whiffler nudging his friend Saunders, begs him to take notice of Tom's eyes, or Dick's chin, or Ned's nose, or Mary Anne's hair, or Emily's figure, or little Bob's calves, or Fanny's mouth, or Carry's head, as the case may be. Whatever the attention of Mr. Saunders is called to, Mr. Saunders admires of course; though he is rather confused about the sex of the youngest branches, and looks at the wrong children, turning to a girl when Mr. Whiffler directs his attention to a boy, and falling into raptures with a boy

when he ought to be enchanted with a girl. Then the dessert comes, and there is a vast deal of scrambling after fruit, and sudden spurning forth of juice out of tight oranges into infant eyes, and much screeching and wailing in consequence. At length it becomes time for Mrs. Whiffler to retire, and all the children are by force of arms compelled to kiss and love Mr. Saunders before going up stairs, except Tom, who, lying on his back in the hall, proclaims that Mr. Saunders "is a naughty beast;" and Dick, who having drunk his father's wine when he was looking another way, is found to be intoxicated, and is carried out, very limp and helpless.

"Ah!" Mr. Whiffler sighs, "these children, Mr. Saunders make one quite an old man." Mr. Saunders thinks that if they were his, they would make him a very old man; but he says nothing.

Doctor Johnson used to tell a story of a man who had but one idea, which was a wrong one. The couple who dote upon their children are in the same predicament, at home or abroad, at all times, and in all places; their thoughts are bound up in this one subject, and have no sphere beyond. They relate the clever things their offspring say or do, and weary every company with their prolixity and absurdity. Mr. Whiffler takes a friend by the button at a street corner on a windy day to tell him a *bôn mot* of his youngest boy's; and Mrs. Whiffler, calling to see a sick acquaintance, entertains her with a cheerful account of all her own past sufferings and present expectations. In such cases the sins of the fathers indeed descend upon the children; for people soon come to regard them as predestined little bores. The couple who dote upon their children cannot be said to be actuated by a general love for these engaging little people (which would be a great excuse), for they are apt to underrate and entertain a jealousy of any children but their own. If they examined their own hearts, they would, perhaps, find at the bottom of all this, more self-love and egotism than they think of. Self-love and egotism are bad qualities, of which the unrestrained exhibition, though it may be sometimes amusing, never fails to be wearisome and unpleasant.

DR. ARNOLD ON THE SUPER-NATURAL.

I PROCEED to notice those Scripture difficulties which are of a mixed character, that is partly religious, and partly critical, historical, or scientific. And this brings us to the objections taken against the Scripture miracles, and to the manner in which it has been attempted to obviate them. I call these difficulties of a mixed character, because they rest partly upon an unwillingness to admit the reality of miracles at all, and partly upon the alleged improbability of any particular miracle, either from the low degree of external testimony in its favour, or from the circumstances of the case. It is greatly to be wished that every man who objects to any of the Scripture narratives would clearly understand and express how far his objection rested on one of these grounds, and how far on the other. If it be founded on the alleged impossibility of all miracles, it is idle to discuss the degree of evidence belonging to any one miracle in particular; for no one, I suppose, would prove the general proposition, that miracles are impossible, by the accident that all those hitherto reported rest on insufficient evidence. Recourse would rather be had to *à priori* arguments—that they were impossible from the nature of things, and that therefore the degree of evidence alleged in their favour, in any particular case, was a matter of absolute indifference. But, on the other hand, if a man allows that miracles are possible, and that they are therefore credible, if well attested, the question, as far as religion is concerned, turns wholly on the truth of a single miracle—the resurrection of Jesus Christ. If this be false, the truth of all the other miracles recorded in Scripture would not warrant our faith as Christians; if it be true, the falsehood of all the rest would be no excuse for our renouncing the Gospel. It is true that if St. John's account of the raising of Lazarus could be proved to be false, it would be a strong argument against our believing his account of the resurrection of Christ; but, supposing for a moment that all the other miracles

in his Gospel were proved interpolations—so that his testimony went only to prove our Lord's resurrection, and that for this it was judged sufficient—then the falsehood of all the other miracles recorded in Scripture would not overthrow our Christian faith, so long as we had the internal evidence afforded by the Scripture prophecies, doctrines and principles of life, together with the one single fact that Christ rose again from the dead. For, after all, the great question of faith or unbelief is this—"May I hope that my sins are forgiven, that my evil nature will be corrected, and that I shall be happy for ever with God? May I trust Christ, that, if I lose my life for his sake—that is, in doing what he commands—I shall find that my loss is my eternal gain? If I may hope this, and safely trust Christ's word, then my Christian faith stands sure; if I may not, then my faith is vain, I am yet in my sins, and without hope beyond the grave." On the other hand, if a man would rather have no prospect beyond the grave—if he cares not for being left in his sins, so long as he is not obliged to renounce them—if he only wishes to be assured that by seeking his life in this world he shall not lose it eternally, he has gained nothing unless he can disprove the fact that Christ died and rose again from the dead. His proving every miracle in the Old Testament to be untrue would no more justify his unbelief than his being able to disprove all the alleged miracles of the dark ages. For unbelief can never be innocent, unless it were inevitable; every difficulty in the Scriptures may be an excuse for it, if we are seeking for excuses; but he who loves God and virtue will cling to them, not till he can find an excuse for quitting them, but till he finds it impossible to abide with them.

As for the general argument against all miracles, I own that I never have been able to comprehend its force, except on grounds of atheism or epicurism. Of course, it is self-evident that, if there is no God, or if He regards not the affairs of men, there can be no miracle; and it is, I believe, on these assumptions, tacitly made, though not

avowed, that the main opposition to miracles has been founded. But, on deistical grounds, the objection is absurd, which, indeed, may be said of every other deistical argument against Christianity. The real question is between God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, and no God at all, or an epicurean one. The occasion for miracles is simply this—that without them all our notions of another life must be no better than guesses. Neither the ideas of perfect wisdom and goodness, nor yet the idea of infinite power, make up, by themselves, our idea of God; but their union produces it instantly. Doctrines and principles of life, however perfect, therefore, may command our belief and obedience on account of their truth and excellence; but they do not bear upon them the mark of such an immediately Divine original as to satisfy us that he who delivers them can really tell us anything of that which eye has not seen nor ear heard, namely, what will befall us after death. But a miracle, which implies supernatural power, when wrought by one whose life and doctrines are good and pure, completes our notion of God being really with him. And, if God be with him, he may be believed when he speaks of those things of which we otherwise could not have obtained more than a mere conjecture. This use of miracles applies to the most enlightened man alive, as well as to the most ignorant; to the purest lover of virtue for its own sake, no less than to him whose knowledge of duty is least clear, and his attachment to it most wavering. But take the bulk of mankind, and they need authority, not only for things which man's loftiest faculties cannot discover, but for those also which, without being really doubtful, have yet been constantly doubted of and disputed—for those truths which, though discoverable, have not been in fact discovered. It might have pleased God, certainly, to leave us to ourselves on these points, nor could we have justly complained if He had done so. But that He should have graciously interposed to aid us, and that He should have vouchsafed by manifestations of superhuman power to give that authority to the language of truth which, from our weak-

ness, it needed, may be, and is, a great instance of His abundant love to us, but cannot surely be regarded as inconsistent with the perfections of His nature, or with the wants of ours.

THE CHRISTIAN RELIGION.

It is the distinctive glory of the Christian religion that it is a tissue of *Personal Affections*, sweetening, expanding, exalting human life, by ties of relation with all known ranks of being; fraternal service to equal men, filial trust towards the "Father in heaven," reverent allegiance to the "Son of Man" who has brought them into open communion. Other systems have had their sublimity of conception, cosmical, metaphysical, poetical; but here alone have we an organisation of the universe by an omnipresent network of moral sympathies. Religion, it has been said, is "Morality coloured with Emotion;" yes, but the emotion of a dependent mind looking up to a Mind all-righteous and supreme. Again, it has been said, Religion is "Moral Idealism;" yes, but with eye upon an ideal which has been humanly realised upon earth, and for ever constitutes a Divine Perfection in heaven. Take away all objective seat for your inward vision, turn it from a perception into a phantom, let it hang in the air and never have been; and, though it may raise a sigh, and pour a plaintive music over life, it can inspire no worship and nerve no will. There is a wave of heathen Pantheism sweeping over our time which threatens to obliterate the consciousness of this truth, and to leave us only the phrases of ancient piety with the life washed out—the empty ghosts of the saints' prayer and the martyrs' cry. Trust, love, reverence, between person and person, speaking in living communion, and quickening all faithful action, are the central essence of pure religion, and the special gift of Christianity. This gift it is the highest function of spiritual philosophy in our age to protect and hand down with unabated power. — *Rev. James Martineau.*

SUNSHINE.

Good people, have you got sunny houses? Does the sun shine out from your dwelling as well as in? Do the sweet, bright, life-giving rays of the light of the world, meet rays of domestic brightness and tenderness, beaming from your hearth-stones? Do you carry smiling faces about with you? When you look in the mirror by chance, do you see there, cheerful happy countenances? And if there is sunshine in the parlour is there any enlivening ray of it in the kitchen? If there is merriment and laughter in the library, is it carried along with you upstairs into the nursery? Are there any rooms in your houses which are damp, gloomy, cold and inhospitable, from lack of the blessed inflowing of domestic sunlight? Throw open the windows; set the doors ajar, let the fresh breeze of purifying cheerfulness sweep through and blow out disagreeable odours, the infectious melancholies, the cobwebs of suspicion, the dust of fault-finding which hides the beauties which lie beneath its distasteful mantle. Let the clean, searching air find out every nook and corner in which have been hiding doubts or hates or envies. Let it filter through and make sweet all the places where selfishness has been breathing. Send the full noonday sun of charity and trust and truth into it, and then invite your loved ones to enter. Let your home, however large or small, elegant or simple, be scented continually with the flower-like odours of tenderness and consideration. Decorate your parlours with courtesy; spread your tables with generous hospitality. Let your loving smiles greet everyone in the house.

Why, friends, you will be astonished to see how light and airy and merry a place the home-nest is. It will be the nook to which you will turn naturally and gladly, as the dearest spot on earth. It will be one continual June day indoors. Winter and rain-storms, clouds and winds will not alter the sunshine inside. The seasons will not change your roses. They will be fadeless flowers, ever giving out fragrance. They will grow and carry their sweetness with them, and the flood of radiance will follow you. — *Golden Rule.*

A TRUE STORY.

ONE cold day in winter a lad stood at the outer door of a cottage on a bleak moor in Scotland. The snow had been falling very fast, and the poor boy looked very cold and hungry.

"Mayn't I stay, ma'am?" he said to the woman who had opened the door. "I'll work, cut wood, go for water, and do all your errands."

"You may come in at any rate until my husband comes home," the woman said. "There, sit down by the fire; you look perishing with the cold;" and she drew a chair up to the warmest corner; then suspiciously glancing at the boy from the corners of her eyes, she continued setting the table for supper.

Presently came the tramp of heavy boots, and the door was swung open with a quick jerk, and the husband entered, wearied with his day's work.

A look of intelligence passed between his wife and himself. He had looked at the boy, but did not seem very well pleased; he nevertheless made him come to the table, and was glad to see how heartily he ate his supper.

Day after day passed, and yet the boy begged to be kept "until tomorrow;" so the good couple, after due consideration, concluded that, as long as he was such a good boy, and worked so willingly, they would keep him.

One day, in the middle of winter, a pedlar, who often traded at the cottage, called, and after disposing of his goods, was preparing to go when he said to the woman:—

"You have a boy out there splitting wood, I see," pointing to the yard.

"Yes; do you know him?"

"I have seen him," replied the pedlar.

"Where? Who is he? What is he?"

"A jail-bird," and then the pedlar swung his pack over his shoulder. "That boy, young as he looks, I saw in court myself, and heard him sentenced—'Ten months.' You'd do well to look carefully after him."

O! there was something so dreadful in the word "jail." The poor woman trembled as she laid away the things

she had bought of the pedlar; nor could she be easy till she called the boy in and assured him that she knew that dark part of his history.

Ashamed and distressed, the boy hung down his head. His cheeks seemed bursting with the hot blood and his lips quivered.

"Well," he muttered, his frame shaking, "there's no use in my trying to do better; everybody hates and despises me; nobody cares about me."

"Tell me," said the woman, "how came you to go, so young, to that dreadful place? Where is your mother?"

"O!" exclaimed the boy, with a burst of grief that was terrible to behold, "O! I hadn't no mother! I hadn't no mother ever since I was a baby! If I only had a mother," he continued, while tears gushed from his eyes, "I wouldn't have been bound out, and kicked, and cuffed, and horse-whipped. I wouldn't have been saucy and got knocked down, and run away, and then stole because I was hungry. O; if I'd only had a mother!"

The strength was all gone from the poor boy, and he sunk on his knees, sobbing great choking sobs, and rubbing the hot tears away with the sleeve of his jacket.

The woman was a mother, and though all her children slept under the cold sod in the churchyard, she was a mother still. She put her hand kindly on the head of the boy, and told him to look up, and said from that time he should find in her a mother. Yes, she even put her arms around the neck of that forsaken, deserted child. She poured from her mother's heart sweet, kind words, words of counsel and of tenderness. O how sweet was her sleep that night—how soft her pillow! She had plucked some thorns from the path of a little sinning but striving mortal.

That poor boy is now a promising man. His foster-father is dead, his foster-mother is aged and sickly, but she knows no want. The "poor out-cast" is her support. Nobly does he repay the trust reposed in him.

"When my father and my mother forsake me, then the Lord will take me up."

THE CROWN-IMPERIAL LILY.

THIS graceful and beautiful flower is a member of the lily family; and its blossoms have been thought to resemble an imperial crown. Its richness of colour, and its peculiarity of form, combine to make the name by which it is generally known a most appropriate one. Yellow and red, with purple streaks, are the prevailing tints of the globes, which hang downward from the stalks like curiously shaped bells; and if they are examined, there will be found in each of them about six drops of clear, shining fluid, which have been likened to pearly tears, and the presence of which is thus accounted for by a German legend:

Of all the blossoms that graced the Garden of Gethsemane, none were more beautiful than this stately lily, whose bells then stood upright on their stems, and were of a pure silvery white, like cups of ivory held up to receive the refreshing dews of heaven.

In this Garden the Saviour of mankind was wont to spend his hours of silent devotion; and the fair flowers which he loved so well bowed their graceful heads in adoration as he walked amid them.

Bells and crowns and stars and cups, golden and ivory, all bent to do him homage. Nay, not all! for one proud beauty would not bend her majestic head; and so she stood up in the presence of the Lord, because she felt that she was more beautiful than her humble-minded sisters.

And our Lord, seeing this, paused, and turned upon her a look of sorrowful reproach, which she could not resist; but immediately her white petals became stained as with blushes, and the symbol of her floral sovereignty, the royal crown, drooped and became reversed; and little tears of repentance made pearly drops within, which, with the change of colour and alteration of position, have ever since continued.

So, blushing, and bending, and weeping, does this stately lily remind us of the pride and haughtiness of heart which is apt to accompany beauty as well as other great gifts, and of the repentance which should follow.

THE SEAMLESS COAT.

"Now the coat was without seam, woven from the top throughout."

THIS would seem a slight incidental remark in the midst of a narrative so painful, so appalling, as the crucifixion of our Lord; and yet it is a remark which no one but an eye-witness of that deeply interesting event could have made, and at the same time so naturally, and with such a graphic pen. John was present during the whole of the terrible scene. He was the only one of the Apostles, who, as it would appear, did not forsake him at the last hour, and near to him, the beloved disciple, was Mary the mother of Jesus, watching with maternal anguish the convulsive throes accompanying the torture, and leaning on the affectionate John for support at this fearful crisis. And John was well rewarded; a legacy the most precious of which we can conceive was left him by his dying Master and Friend. "Woman, behold thy son! Son, Behold thy mother." And from that hour that disciple took her unto his own home. And yet we are told some unknown person wrote in the name of John this beautiful gospel, and that we have no assurance of the truth of anything it contains. We envy not the feelings of any who make this assertion.

But the seamless coat—too valuable to rend asunder, and for which the coarse Roman soldiers cast lots—suggests some feelings, the more pleasing that they stand out in strong relief from the melancholy history surrounding them. And we remark—

I. That our Master did not hesitate to wear, and as his ordinary covering, a curious and probably a costly robe. In all the higher class of virtues a perfect model for imitation, he was not less so in the decencies and proprieties of daily life. There was rigorous self-denial in his whole deportment, but nothing like asceticism. He came, eating and drinking, living in the common, innocent practices of society, just as other men. He contributed to the hallowed mirth of a marriage festival; he dined with a ruler of the people; he accepted with his wonted courtesy

the precious ointment for his feet; and we cannot doubt that grace as well as dignity marked all his actions. How unlike the Saviour's practice—the sordid garment, the hempen girdle, the sackcloth shirt, and the knotted scourge. Whilst he insisted on the weightier duties of the law, he neglected not the tithe of mint, anise, and cummin—the things that we must do, not leaving the others undone.

II. The seamless robe emblemises his religion—so whole in itself, so without spot or wrinkle, so incapable of being rent asunder without destruction to its existence. We cannot parcel it out, we cannot take it to pieces, keeping a bit here and a bit there, and rejecting the rest. There are those who speak slightly of the records of his life and his sayings, who relegate all these to the region of myths and legends, and yet who profess to be enamoured of his character as a hero and a reformer; who disregard his appeals to the miracles wrought by him, putting them aside as idle tales; still who profess to revere him as a moral teacher, and to admire the purity of his precepts and the saintliness of his life, forgetting—as it appears to us—the fact, that if he pretended, or even fancied, himself to be the Messiah, when there existed nothing to justify his claims, he could not be the lofty, the spiritual, nay, nor the sincere being their representations make him. He claimed to be the Son of God, and he appealed to the wonderful things he had done in proof of his claims. Surely he could not have been mistaken in these. If he worked miracles, all his history is clear as the noonday sun; if he did not, everything related of him becomes obscure, and is involved in the most hopeless confusion. We say, you cannot have a piece of cloth all warp or all weft; these must be closely interwoven to form the complete texture. So the historical and the preceptive parts of Christianity make the warp and the woof. Separate these, and you have but flimsy threads; combine them, and there is the robe woven from the top throughout. And thus the lot is fallen to us; we gratefully, and with all reverence accept it. We believe

that God raised up Jesus, and gave him a name beyond every other name. In that name we bow to his Father and our Father—his God and our God.

III. The soldiers did not rend the robe; that would have been to destroy its use as well as its beauty. The robe without seam is the Church of Christ, such as it came from his hands and was sanctified by his word. "O to learn this lesson well!" Yet what bitter animosities, what strifes, what anathemas, what a casting out of communion, have made up the greater part of Church history. That on such an all-important subject as religion men's minds will differ, and that widely, is no matter for surprise or for lamentation; but then they may agree to differ. They may respect each other's honest convictions, and they may keep the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace. Christ alone is our Master, and to him we should, every one of us, ultimately appeal. He would tell us to speak the truth, but always in love; to search for ourselves, yet to aim at enlightening our neighbours. He would sharply reprove Diotrephes for seeking the pre-eminence, and he would again and again remind his would-be but contending followers that by this only could they be known and acknowledged as his disciples—by their loving one another. Sects will yet exist, but sectarian hatred need not exist. We must not tear the robe; we must not try to pick it to pieces. Surely it is wide enough also, to enfold all—by what party name soever they may call themselves—who choose, sincerely and reverently, to claim the Christian name. We gladly hold out the right hand of fellowship to Fenelon and Priestley, to Heber and Channing, to Wesley and to Penn. We believe they followed the Lamb in the singleness of their hearts. With our whole hearts we say, "Great grace be with all who love the Lord Jesus in sincerity."

IV. And lastly, though not less noticeable, the garment worn by the Saviour illustrates his character. It was without seam—perfect in itself. How exalted, how pure, how benevolent, how altogether lovely was the life of him whom we call Lord, Master, and guide.

How fitted to form our own! What a sublime model for imitation have we before us! We have nothing to do but to walk in his steps. For us he suffered, and died, and rose again. Let us be careful to be found in him, that so we may meet his second appearance with acceptance and with joy.

ANTHONY'S FISH SERMON.

ST. ANTHONY one day
Found the church empty Sunday,
So he goes to the river,
A discourse to deliver.
They're ready to listen—
Their tails flap and glisten.

The carps—those old scorners—
Come out of their corners,
Their carping suspended,
Their jaws wide extended,
(Ears wanting) to swallow
Remarks that might follow.

The pouts—cross-grained pouters—
Those well-known come-outers,
For this once go-inners,
Confessed themselves sinners.
The pouts said they never
Heard sermon so clever.

Crabs and mud-turtles, also,
That generally crawl so,
And in dirt their heads bury,
Came up in a hurry—
Crabs and turtles had never
Heard sermon so clever.

Eels and sturgeons—best livers
Of all in the rivers—
Forsaking their dinners,
Confessed themselves sinners;
Eels and sturgeons had never
Heard sermon so clever.

And lastly those odd fish.
We mortals call codfish,
Their glass eyes distended,
Devoutly attended,
Like rational creatures,
This greatest of preachers.

And dogfish and catfish,
And flounders and flatfish,
And finally, all fish,
Both great fish and small fish,
Came swimming and squirming
In shoals to the sermon.
And all said they never
Had heard sermon so clever.

When sermon was ended
To their business all wended;
The pikes to their thieving,
The eels to good living;
The crab still goes crooked,
The codfish is stupid;
Yet none of them ever
Heard sermon so clever.

THE STORY OF A TOAD.

BY E. B. JONES.

Now I suppose you will say that I cannot tell you anything interesting about a toad, but I know a lady who thinks very differently, for whenever she sees a real fat, rosy, dimpled little baby, she says to it, "You dear little toady!" And another lady who never had any children, and who was left all alone in the world by the death of her husband, told me that she received great comfort from an old toad that had always lived under the doorstep; for every morning and evening when she would go out on the verandah, feeling so sad and lonely, that toad would hop out and sit at her feet, winking and blinking as though trying to help and comfort her.

I will begin this story as Susy likes me to begin stories for her:—Once upon a time, by a country road-side, stood a house with graceful vines, hanging baskets, and the beautiful flowers all about it. The people who lived here had two children, George and Lillian. Among the plants was a choice monthly rose-bush which stood in a large pot on the doorstep. One evening when the lady was watering these plants and removing the dead leaves, she noticed that the earth was very much disturbed about this rose-bush, and looking down close, what was her surprise to see two black eyes staring up at her from the earth at the foot of the bush. Nothing else was visible but those eyes. I must say she screamed a little, just enough to bring the children out to see what had happened, and George, who was quite a large boy, took his father's cane, and began poking the earth very carefully, for he had a kind heart, and did not wish to hurt it, whatever it might be, when all of a sudden, with one great spring, out hopped a toad. It was funny to hear Lillian laugh and scream at the same time when she saw it; but George said, "You old fellow, we don't care for your company. Hop off." Which

advice was very quickly taken, and he was soon lost in the long grass down the walk. But the next evening, when the lady as usual went out on the porch to water her plants, what should she see but the same toad in the same flower-pot all buried in the earth but his eyes as before! George had just started to bring up the crows from the pasture, but his mother called him, and he came running back with a broad shingle in one hand. "Here," he said, "let me have the old fellow; I will take him with me down to the Hemlocks, and I guess he will not get back from there in a hurry;" I wish you could have seen George as he marched away with the toad perched on the shingle, and looking as sedate and unconcerned as though used to riding in that way all his life. George kept his word, and did not deposit it until he reached the lot they called the Hemlock, which was about half a mile from the house. There he put it down and left it, and his mother felt relieved when he told her how far away he had taken it. But an evening or two after she found this obstinate old fellow back again.

"It is not the same one," said George when he looked at it.

"It cannot be the same!"

"Let us mark it and see," said Lillian, taken a scarlet thread from her pocket. George took it and fastened it around one of his legs, and took it back to the Hemlock. But in two days and a night it was back again with the scarlet thread on its leg. By this time the children had told their father, and he was so much interested that he took the little creature the next day in his carriage and put it down three miles from his house. But what was their astonishment, in four or five days, to see him back again.

In coming that three miles, if it came by the road, it had to turn a corner; if it came across lots, it had to pass through some woods.

About this time their grandfather called at their house on his way to an appointment for preaching, and took the toad with him and put it down ten miles from their house, and it never came back.

JESUS AND THE COMMON PEOPLE.

THE common people heard him gladly. This is one of the clearest tokens of the divinity of his teachings. The simplicity and frequent homeliness of these teachings have, no doubt, repelled some, who would fain have had from him profound discussions as to the divine nature, the ground of right, the functions of conscience, the essence and mode of the life to come. But such discussions would have been for the few, not for the many. If a teacher came from God with a broad mission to humanity, his instructions must of necessity have been adapted to the common people; for they are the overwhelming majority of Christian believers and workers.

The common people heard him gladly. We are all common people as to the ground covered by his teachings. The duties incumbent on us to God and man have, in their principles, their motives, their spirit, no diversity corresponding to the differences of condition and culture. The Sermon on the Mount may all be lived out by the labourer, the poor widow, the person whose intelligence and sphere of action are of the very narrowest; and at the same time there is no life so large, so high, so extended in its relations and responsibilities, that it may not find here all that it is bound to be and to do. Still more, we can conceive of no broader, fuller, loftier law of duty for the redeemed in heaven, or for any created being in the universe.

As regards our trials and our griefs, too, we are all common people. There is no resource for high or low, when the heart is overwhelmed, but trust in Almighty love; no prayer that can bring an answer of peace, but "Father, thy will, not mine, be done." In the presence of the mighty leveller, Death, we are all common people. When the shadows of death seem near; when the feet of those who have buried our kindred are at our own doors; when we are conscious of passing rapidly down the graveward declivity, it is not on any self-spun fabric that our hopes depend; we are all alike, in our conscious imperfection and sinfulness, and, with the realm of the unseen close before us, look

to him who incarnated on earth the forgiveness of heaven, who uttered with authority the words of eternal life, who pointed to the everlasting mansions in the Father's house, who said by the graveside, as none other ever spake, "I am the Resurrection and the Life; he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live; and whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die." — *Dr. A. P. Peabody.*

RESPECT TO OLD AGE.

RALPH GORDON was very fond of his grandfather. He was sorry to leave him, even for a visit in the city. But such a kind letter had come from his cousins telling of their happy home, and the many pleasures in store for him if he would visit them, that he scarcely knew what to do. "Go, my boy," said his grandfather. "Mamma and papa and I will talk of you every day, and have all the merrier times when you come back."

It was strange to hear so old a man talk of merry times; but the truth is he had kept his heart as young and fresh as a boy's. Persons can do so, you know, if they take all that comes in life in the right way, and try to make the world the happier for their having lived.

Ralph had a good time in the city. He saw much that was wonderful. But he was troubled about two things. He saw there, for the first time, his other grandfather.

"How glad my cousins must be to have him in the house!" he thought. "I suppose they feel just as I do to my home grandfather."

But Ralph soon found that his cousins considered the grandfather a great trouble. They could scarcely speak respectfully to him. They always seemed to be wishing him upstairs, out of the way. They laughed at Ralph for offering to read to him, or running to tell him about their gay times outside.

But Ralph was a dear boy to the city grandfather through the weeks of that visit, so that the grandfather missed him sadly when he went away. Really, to speak the truth, Ralph's behaviour

made the cousins more kind and thoughtful; a good example is never lost.

The other thing that troubled Ralph was the way in which persons spoke of his dear country grandfather.

"He must be a very old man," said one. "Strange that he should live to such an age!" said another. "He must be too feeble to live much longer," remarked a third.

All true, indeed, but thoughts that had not come to Ralph. His heart ached at the idea of soon losing such a dear friend.

When he reached home, he ran at once to the garden to see his grandfather. After the first few loving words, the little boy stood looking at him with a new, strange, sad look, as much as to say, "I never thought of you as so old. I hope, dear grandfather, you won't die for some time."

"You are home for my birthday, dear boy," said the old gentleman. "Next week I shall be eighty-four years old."

Ralph began at once to think how he could make it a happy birthday. He talked over many plans with his father and mother.

First, he wanted to induce his grandfather to give up working in the garden; but his mother said few things gave him more pleasure. Finally they decided on a birthday party, to which all the old ladies and gentlemen in the neighbourhood should be invited.

Ralph sent invitations to all the cousins. The day came very soon. The grounds were quite covered with carriages and visitors. The whole affair was kept a secret from grandfather till the very day. I wish I had space enough to tell you of all the fun among the old ladies and gentlemen. There seemed quite a rivalry to see who could tell the most laughable stories about their youth. Ralph thought his grandfather showed more wit than anyone else; the young people forgot their games in the pleasure of listening.

There was also a grave part in the affair; it came when a beautiful large Bible was handed to the grandfather as a birthday gift. He told his friends, in a few sweet words, all that the dear book had been to him. Turning to the

young cousins, he added, "There is one blessing that I am quite sure will come upon this dear head"—putting his hand affectionately upon Ralph—"even the blessing that God has promised to those who honour the aged."

THE MINISTER IN THE SICK ROOM.

WE wish to say something about one form of parochial work, viz., the visits to the sick, the minister's presence in the chamber of sickness. If physicians were to say to the minister's face what they think, he might be for ever discouraged about this part of the work. But the physician is thinking of the men who plant themselves by the bedside of the sick like animated grave-stones, as it were anticipating in their bearing, in the presence of the victim, the obsequies which are supposed to be near at hand. Physicians have the right, and should stubbornly insist upon it, to exclude from the bedside of the patient any one whose presence may be, in his judgment, in the least harmful, no matter if he be the parson or the Pope.

A dear old lady, who had sailed many troubled seas and with unabated trust in the Eternal Love, was at last making port for ever. Was it not an impertinence for the dapper little chap in well-brushed clothes to insist upon asking her if she had made her peace with God? "I have never had a quarrel with him," she said.

Even when a patient asks to see the clergyman, who may excite him or depress him, and thus interrupt the process of healing which the faithful physician watches with intense interest, the vast responsibility in the hands of the physician would justify him in acting just as he would if the patient made any other unreasonable request.

But the true minister in the chamber of sickness will not harmfully excite or depress the sufferer. No man who longs to be a fully-equipped helper in this business of human life can afford to neglect this very sacred claim. The minister should be the natural ally of the physician. He should know something about diseases and their methods

of treatment; how to read symptoms, how to deal with the caprices and whims of sick people, how to help the physician in emergencies, how to be necessary. It would be a vast gain if our physicians could have that spiritual training which would enable them to interpret the symptoms of the spirits—if they could be religious men and represent both professions. It will be a great point gained when physicians bear themselves with tenderness and dignity in the sick room even as physicians, and perhaps that is as much as we have any right at present to expect.

Let the minister, however, do his full share. Let him learn how to fit himself into such a demand; how to honour it to the full; how to impart a wise, helpful sympathy; how to have the healing touch and the voice which carries cure in its very tone. The office of healing is sacred, and one profession will assist and inspire the other when the preacher makes himself useful to the physician.

And because great harm may have been done sick persons by exciting or alarming them by unsolicited conversation upon the topic of religion, let it not therefore be decided that this sacred theme is never to be introduced or discussed. The wise, timely, tender recognition of this great claim never harms even a sick man—nay, many an ache has been cured, or at least for the moment forgotten, while the spirit intent on things of the spirit could assert its superiority to physical limitation or even suffering. No sick man or woman should in the least be encouraged or allowed to think that the record of a life of indifference or opposition to higher claims can be put away by an hour's talk with a preacher. It is always better to be sorry for our sin than otherwise, but the sick chamber offers slender opportunity to undo the wrong-doing of a life. It is an awful insult to the majesty of virtue to suggest such a thing. But if a man be wise, tender, and quick to apprehend the necessities of those in distress, he will be able to tranquillise the spirit of suffering, and lift the wearied soul into a blessed consciousness of the ever-

lasting strength and peace. When the minister goes as a minister, and not a stiff, consequential constable of Jehovah, the sick heart will welcome him, and at the right time the consideration of everlasting things will come naturally and be of precious service.

It seems hard that a genuine helper among men must wait often for his opportunity until men are prostrated by disease, until they are brought back from battles with ugly wound or maimed limb; but even such opportunity is most sacred; and happy are the ministers who have a right disposition toward such offices, and who learn by genuine power of healing to lift the fading eye to visions of perpetual beauty, to direct the weary wanderer to the welcome of the everlasting home.—*Liberal Christian.*

AN HOUR OF PEACE.

THERE came to me an hour of peace,
An hour supremely blest;
A living faith was in my heart,
My soul had found its rest.

All cares, all griefs were silenced now,
And hushed each anxious fear;
For God was present with me there,
I felt that he was near.

The Father's hand was holding me;
Could pain or sorrow move
My spirit, or o'erburden me,
Encircled by his love?

And as I felt, tho' time might bring
Or good, or seeming ill,
I should be safely guided on,
His hand would hold me still.

Alas! why is it when we climb
Beyond the reach of pain,
We cannot stay upon the height,
But must fall back again?

The soft calm faded from my soul,
And care resumed his sway;
The faith that seemed so bright and strong
Has almost passed away.

But yet that glimpse of heaven was
sweet,
Though short was the release;
And I would thank thee, O my God,
For that sweet hour of peace.

London.

M. R.

THE REVIVALIST.

WE have the following from one of our ministers, who does not like to give to the public the name of the celebrated English Revivalist with whom he had the interview. He adds, if any one questions the truthfulness of the narrative, he can give the names of two or three persons who were present when this conversation took place. The host of the house in which it was held is recently dead. But now to this amusing narrative of one of the most marked Revivalists of the present day, still holding on his way, we hope, doing some good, nevertheless:—

Several years ago I had an accidental meeting with this Revivalist. The interview took place at a farm-house not very far from the ancient church of Prestbury in Cheshire. Seeing from the window of the house a man stalking along in an adjoining field, wearing a wide-awake hat, and carrying a gun in his hand, the following conversation took place between the Host and myself, whom I shall here designate as the visitor:—

Visitor: "Pray who is that sportsman in the field?"

Host: "That is my neighbour, the Revivalist."

Visitor: "Ah! Indeed! and so he lives near."

Host: "Yes, you may see his house in the middle of the garden yonder."

Visitor: "And does he spend much time in this way?"

Host: "Oh yes, and in taking drives through the country lanes in his conveyance."

Visitor: "His own conveyance? How can he afford all that?"

Host: "Oh easily. You see he takes now and then a preaching journey in Ireland, Scotland, Lancashire, or Yorkshire, each journey of two or three weeks' duration. Then after each journey he comes home and leads an easy, pleasant life, receiving almost every day letters by post containing post-office orders, Bank of England notes and cheques, as offerings from parties who have been benefited by his preaching, or who thinks he is doing a good work."

Visitor: "Then he must be accumulating money."

Host: "At least he is accumulating property, having already several houses near Alderley Edge."

Visitor: "And so your enterprising neighbour preaches now and then a few weeks, now and then plays a few weeks, accumulates property, and leads a merry life and free."

Somewhat later in the day, as fortune would have it, the Revivalist called at the farm-house. After a few introductory words the following colloquy ensued:—

The Revivalist: "And so you are a preacher?"

Visitor: "That is my calling."

The Revivalist: "I suppose you preach for a salary."

Visitor: "I get a salary, I am happy to say. I hope, however, you don't think the salary my main object in preaching."

The Revivalist: "Oh, you should do as I do, preach the Gospel without money and without price."

The Visitor: "Still you get the price in one shape or other, or else how do you live?"

The Revivalist: "The Lord does and will provide."

The Visitor: "No doubt. The Lord provides for you in one way, and for me in another way. It comes to much the same thing in the end. Only perhaps, in a pecuniary sense, yours is much the best arrangement of the two."

The Revivalist: "But you don't preach the true Gospel."

The Visitor: "That is a gratuitous and unjust assumption."

The Revivalist: "But you don't believe in the Trinity, and you don't believe in the Divinity of Jesus Christ, and the Bible is full of them, especially in the Greek."

The Visitor: "Oh! in the Greek? Is the Greek then a favourite study of yours?"

The Revivalist: "Certainly. I read the Greek. And if I had only my Greek Testament here I could upset all your doctrines."

The Visitor: "As to the upsetting of doctrines, that might possibly be the

other way. But I should like to see your Greek Testament?"

The Revivalist: "Here, So-and-so (addressing one of the household) go to my house and tell my wife to send me my Greek Testament." The messenger returning, said, "Your wife could not find the book, and did not understand exactly what book you wanted." Evidently she was not up to Greek.

By and by, however, the book was obtained, and it must be confessed, the sight of the book caused not a little surprise. In the first place, it was as large as a Family Bible. In the second place, it had a remarkably large and fine Greek text. And in the third place, it had the Greek text interlined with a large, clear English text.

The Visitor: "Oh! dear sir, I hope you don't read the Greek between the lines."

The Revivalist (sharply): "No, I don't. I read the Greek itself."

The Visitor: "Be so good as to read a little."

Through a few verses he then stumbled his way, but with such a pronunciation, and with such accent as would have given a venerable professor, the visitor knows, a nervous attack, and made him stern and severe for many a day. But the Revivalist's greatest difficulty was in trying to fit the English words to the Greek words. This exercise made him very angry, and he gave it up saying, "Let us go to the argument in the first and second verses of the Gospel of St. John." After a brief controversy about the meaning of the word "logos," he fixed on the first Greek word in the second verse, vehemently affirming that "Outos" was the Greek term for Christ. It was no use telling him that "Christos" was the Greek term for Christ; he stuck to "Outos" with the most determined pertinacity. On this point his words came fast and furious, until at length he said, Let us pray! and then prayed a fast and furious prayer.

And so ended the visitor's first and last intercourse with this very celebrated Revivalist.

THE SHEPHERD BOY.

ONE beautiful spring morning, a merry-hearted shepherd boy was watch-

ing his flock in a blooming valley between woody mountains, and was singing and dancing for very joy. The prince of the land was hunting in the neighbourhood, and seeing him, called him nearer and said:—

"What makes you so very happy, my dear little one?"

The boy did not know the prince, and replied:—

"Why shouldn't I be happy? Our most gracious sovereign is not richer than I am!"

"How so?" asked the prince. "Let me hear about your riches."

"The sun in the clear blue sky shines as brightly for me as for the prince," said the youth; "and mountain and valley grow as green and bloom as sweetly for me as for him. I would not part with my two hands for all the money, nor sell my two feet for all the jewels in the royal treasury. Besides, I have everything I really need. I have food enough to eat every day, and good warm clothes to wear, and get money enough every year for my labour and pains to meet all my wants. Can you say the prince really has more?"

The kind prince smiled, made himself known, and said:—"You are right, my boy. Keep fast hold of your cheerful spirit."

CHILDREN'S EVENING HYMN.

THE little birds now seek their rest;
The baby sleeps on mother's breast;
Thou givest all Thy children rest,
God of the weary.

The sailor prayeth on the sea;
The little ones at mother's knee
Now come in penitence to Thee,
God of the weary.

The orphan puts away his fears;
The troubled hopes for happier years;
Thou driest all the mourners' tears,
God of the weary.

Thou sendest rest to tired feet,
To little toilers slumbering sweet,
To aching hearts repose complete,
God of the weary.

In grief, perplexity or pain,
None ever come to Thee in vain;
Thou makest life a joy again,
God of the weary.

The sleep that we may wake renewed,
To serve Thee as Thy children should,
With love, and zeal, and gratitude,
God of the weary.

WAYSIDE GATHERINGS.

GOSSIP.—A modern essayist defines "gossip" to be the "putting of two and two together and making five of them."

THE BIBLE.—The editor of a "heathen" paper in Bengal says: "If a person studies the English language with a view to gain wisdom, there is not a book more worthy of being read than the Bible."

THEIR LEVEL.—A gentleman while making a speech, inadvertently stepping forward, fell off the platform. In response to the peals of laughter that greeted his unlucky fall, he claimed that a speaker had a right to come down to the level of his audience.

THE MARTYRS.—Referring to the talk about men killing themselves in God's service, a Baptist contemporary says: "We would, on the whole, rather like to see the remains of those who had shortened their life through excessive attachment to the cause of Christ."

FOUND GRACE.—A preacher on the borders, who not long ago had entered into the happy state of matrimony with a maiden named Grace, rather surprised his hearers on the ensuing Sabbath by giving out as his text, "The Grace that is given me of God." The sermon, as might have been expected, was well worthy of the newly made Benedict.

THE ADVANTAGE.—"I had more money than he had to carry on the suit," said a very mean individual, who had just won a lawsuit over a poor neighbour, "and that's where I had the advantage of him; and then I had much better counsel than he, and there I had the advantage of him; and his family were sick while the suit was pending, so he couldn't attend to it; and there I had the advantage of him again. But then Brown is a very decent sort of a man, after all." "Yes," said his listener; "and there's where he had the advantage of you."

BE NOT OVER GRAVE.—Both body and mind are made better by a little cheerful talk, and even by cheerful devotion; while the opposite has a most depressing effect. Members of religion sometimes overshoot their mark. Mr. Forster, in his "Life of Charles Dickens," gives us this: "An arch-deacon," wrote Mr. Carlyle to me, "with his own venerable lips repeated to me, the other night, a strange profane story of a solemn clergyman who had been administering ghostly consolation to a sick person. Having finished, satisfactorily as he thought, and got out of the room, he heard the sick person ejaculate: 'Well, thank God, *Pickwick* will be out in ten days, any way!' This is dreadful."

SOMETHING LIKE ANCESTRY.—Sir Watkin Williams Wynne, talking to a friend about the antiquity of his family, which he carried up to Noah, was told that he was a mere mushroom of yesterday. "How so, pray?" said the baronet. "Why," continued the other, "when I was in Wales a pedigree of a particular family was shown to me; it filled five large skins of parchment, and near the middle of it was a note in the margin, '*About this time the world was created.*'"

A BAD ISM.—"What keeps Mr. N— from kirk, James?" said a worthy minister. "I hope it's not Methodism." "No," responded the verger; "it's something worse than Methodism." "What then? Is it Calvinism?" "Worse, your reverence, worse!" "Surely, James, it is not Deism?" "Much worse, an' it please your reverence, than even that." "Good heavens!" said the astonished pastor. "Can it be Atheism which deprives us of the best churchwarden that ever shook a box?" "Truly," responded pious James, "'tis a much more serious matter; it is rheumatism!"

THE CURATE WANTED.—The London *Standard* tells the following story: "A North Devon rector was much in want of a curate. He was also the master of a rattling pack of hounds; and his churchwarden, Tozer, paying the market-town a visit, was thus accosted by his grocer: 'Well, Mr. Tozer, have you got a coorate yit for Bridgwell?' 'Not yit; they don't all suit maister; but here's his advertisement, so I reckon he'll soon get one: 'Wanted, a curate for Bridgwell; must be a gentleman of moderate and orthodox views.'" 'Orthodox, Mr. Tozer. What doth he mean by orthodox?' 'Well,' said the churchwarden, thoughtfully, and in deep perplexity, knowing the double nature of the curate's duties, secular as well as sacred, 'well, I can't exactly say; but I reckon 'tis a man as can ride pretty well.'"

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